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CORRESPONDENCE MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 21, 2005
TO: Group Insurance Board
FROM: Vicki Poole, Director of Legislation, Communications and Planning
Phone: 261-7940; E-mail: vicki.poole@etf.state.wi.us
SUBJECT: Legislative Update

The following is an update of bills introduced during the 2005 legislative session that have the potential to affect programs administered by the Group Insurance Board (GIB). Actions taken are listed in *italics* following a description of each bill. Bills that are new since the last Board meeting are marked with an asterisk; if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

AB 83 allows a state employee to elect not to receive health care coverage under a plan offered by the GIB and to elect instead to receive a monthly stipend equal to 24% of the lowest monthly premium amount the state would otherwise have been required to pay for the coverage.

Introduced by Rep. Towns 2/3/05. Referred to Committee on Gov't. Operations and Spending Limitations.

AB 108 allows certain private sector employers and employees to be covered under the state's health care coverage plan.

Introduced by Rep. Nelson 2/17/05. Referred to Committee on Gov't. Operations and Spending Limitations.

AB 199 allows purchase of health care coverage through the GIB by individuals engaged in farming (same as SB108).

Introduced by Rep. Towns 3/10/05. Referred to Committee on Insurance.

AB 329 adds a new appointed member to the GIB. The new member must be a chief executive or governing board member of a local unit of government (same as SB 149).

Introduced by Rep. Musser 4/15/05. Referred to Committee on Insurance. Public hearing held 5/19/05. Passed 15-0. Referred to Committee on Rules.

Reviewed and approved by Tom Korpady, Division of Insurance Services.

Signature _____

Date _____

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AB 341 offers health savings accounts under the state employee health care coverage program (same as SB 131).

Introduced by Rep. Strachota 4/15/05. Referred to Committee on Health. Public hearing held 6/9/05.

AB 352 provides that beginning January 1, 2006, any state resident who is eligible for a tax credit under the federal Trade Adjustment Assistance Reform Act of 2002 or who is receiving benefits from the federal Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation may elect to receive coverage under any health care coverage plan offered to state employees by paying the full cost of required premiums.

Introduced by Rep. Sheridan 4/22/05. Referred to Committee on Insurance.

AB 503 defines marriage as between one man and one woman and establishing domestic partnership; provides coverage for domestic partners of UW System employees and annuitants under health care coverage plans and long-term care insurance policies offered by the GIB.

Introduced by Rep. Schneider 6/17/05. Referred to Committee on Insurance.

AB 515 changes collective bargaining over health care coverage for municipal employees and allows municipal employers to change health care coverage plan providers. This could have the effect of increasing the number of local government employers who participate in the GIB local government health insurance program (similar to SB 242).

Introduced by Rep. McCormick 6/28/05. Referred to Joint Committee on Finance.

AB 516 requires the GIB to prepare a report on offering group health insurance plans at different cost levels to local government employers and employees.

Introduced by Rep. McCormick 6/28/05. Referred to Joint Committee on Finance.

AB 517 requires the GIB to offer for purchase long-term care insurance policies to employees of local governments.

Introduced by Rep. McCormick 6/28/05. Referred to Joint Committee on Finance.

AB 519 amends statutes related to disclosure of health insurance claims experience of local government units and grants rule-making authority to the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance.

Introduced by Rep. McCormick 6/28/05. Referred to Joint Committee on Finance.

***AB 617** requires coverage of certain health care costs in cancer clinic trials (same as SB 288).

Introduced by Rep. Gunderson 8/19/05. Referred to Committee on Insurance.

SB 108 authorizes purchase of health care coverage through the GIB by individuals engaged in farming (same as AB 199).

Introduced by Sen. Leibham 3/10/05; Sen. Darling added as co-author. Referred to Committee on Agriculture and Insurance.

SB 128 increases the limits for insurance coverage of nervous or mental health disorders or alcoholism or other drug abuse problems.

Introduced by Sen. Hansen 3/18/05. Referred to Committee on Agriculture and Insurance. Referred to Joint Committee on Finance.

SB 131 offers health savings accounts under the state employee health care coverage program (same as AB 341).

Introduced by Sen. Darling 3/23/05. Referred to Joint Committee on Finance.

SB 149 adds a new appointed member to the GIB. The new member must be a chief executive or governing board member of a local unit of government (same as AB 329).

Introduced by Sen. Brown 3/29/05. Referred to Committee on Agriculture and Insurance. Passed 7-0. Referred to Committee on Rules.

SB 242 changes collective bargaining over health care coverage for municipal employees and allows municipal employers to change health care coverage plan providers. This could have the effect of increasing the number of local government employers who participate in the GIB local government health insurance program (similar to AB 515).

Introduced by Sen. Darling 6/15/05. Referred to Committee on Agriculture and Insurance.

***SB 288** requires coverage of certain health care costs in cancer clinical trials (same as AB 617).

Introduced by Sen. Stepp 8/17/05. Referred to Committee on Health. Public hearing held 8/31/05.